

Message Text

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PAGE 01 DAMASC 01677 261325Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 SSM-03 CIAE-00 DODE-00
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7367
INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
AMEMBASSY AMMAN
USINT BAGHDAD
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L DAMASCUS 1677

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PEPR, SY, IS, EG, RO
SUBJ: ROMANIAN SEES ASSAD AS STILL COMMITTED TO A PEACEFUL
SETTLEMENT

1. ROMANIAN EMBOFF CALLED ON EMBASSY MARCH 23 AND PROVIDED
US WITH A VERY SKETCHY READOUT OF FORMER PRIMIN MANESCU'S
VISIT HERE MARCH 11-17 AND SEVEN-HOUR MEETING WITH ASSAD
ON MARCH 16 (DURING THE ISRAELI THRUST INTO LEBANON).
ACCORDING TO ROMANIAN, ASSAD WAS RELAXED AND SHOWED NO SIGN
OF STRAIN. HE COVERED THE FULL RANGE OF SYRO-ROMANIAN
INTERESTS WITH MANESCU INCLUDING SEVERAL MAJOR PROJECTS IN
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PAGE 02 DAMASC 01677 261325Z

WHICH ROMANIANS ARE INVOLVED HERE.

2. MAIN POINT ROMANIAN WISHED TO CONVEY WAS THAT THEY
BELIEVED SYRIA STILL FULLY COMMITTED TO A NEGOTIATED
SETTLEMENT OF THE ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT. ROMANIAN OBSERVED,
HOWEVER, THAT, IN THEIR VIEW, SYRIA HAD NOT SUFFICIENTLY
PONDERED HOW TO GET THERE OR WHAT IT WOULD BE READY TO GIVE

IN RETURN FOR ITS DEMANDS. HE OPINED THAT SYRIA MAY BE CONCERNED WITH OBTAINING SUFFICIENT FINANCIAL BACKING IN A POST-CONFLICT ERA.

3. HE NOTED THAT ROMANIA'S OCCASIONAL MEDIATORY ROLE BETWEEN EGYPT AND ISRAEL HAD HAD NO NOTICEABLE ADVERSE EFFECT ON SYRO-ROMAIAN RELATIONS. RUMANIANS ARE CONVINCED THAT SYRIA WILL BE READY TO DEAL AGAIN WITH SADAT IF HE ADMITS THAT HIS INITIATIVE HAD FAILED DESPITE HIS BEST EFFORTS TO SECURE A COMPREHENSIVE SETTLEMENT. HE HINTED THAT ROMANIA COULD HAVE A ROLE TO PLAY IN RECONCILING SADAT AND ASSAD.

4. HE CONFIRMED OTHER REPORTS RECEIVED OF SYRIA'S DISPLEASURE WITH THE PREDICAMENT FATAH CREATED FOR SYRIA THROUGH ITS

MARCH 11 RAID INTO THE ISRAELI HEARTLAND, BUT SYRIANS REMAIN COMMITTED TO A PLO PRESENCE IN ANY PEACE TALKS. THE ROMANIAN GOVERNMENT BELIEVED THAT IT WAS TIME FOR THE PALESTINIANS TO UNIFY THEIR RANKS AND CONCENTRATE ON POLITICAL RATHER THAN MILITARY ACTION.

5. DURING THE VISIT MANESCU MADE CLEAR ROMANIA'S STRONG OPPOSITION TO ISRAEL'S ENTRY INTO SOUTH LEBANON. HE PASSED TO THE SYRIANS A LONG STATMENT WHICH APPEARED IN THE OFFICIAL ROMANIAN COMMUNIST PARTY NEWSPAPER ACCUSING ISRAEL OF VIOLATING LEBANESE SOVEREIGNTY AND SHARPLY CONDEMNING CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 DAMASC 01677 261325Z

ISRAEL'S AGGRESSION AS AN OBSTACLE TO PEACE. THE STATMENT WENT ON TO CALL FOR SELF-DETERMINATION FOR THE PALESTINIANS INCLUDING THEIR RIGHT TO ESTABLISH AN INDEPENDENT STATE. ONLY DISCORDANT NOTE FROM SYRIAN VIEWPOINT WAS A CALL FOR REALIZING OPPORTUNITIES FOR JUST AGREEMENTS WHICH SADAT'S VISIT "HAD OPENED" AND AVOIDING ANY ACTIONS HARMING TALKS AIMED AT A JUST AND LASTING SOLUTION..." STATMENT FURTHER CALLED IT "OF SPECIAL IMPORTANCE" THAT THE GENEVA CONFERENCE BE RECONVENED.

6. THE FINAL SYRO-ROMANIAN COMMUNIQUE CALLED FOR ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL "FROM ALL TERRITORIES OCCUPIED IN 1967" AND RECOGNIZING PALESTINIAN "RIGHT TO SELF-DETERMINATION, RETURN TO THEIR HOMES, AND TO SET UP AN INDEPENDENT STATE..." THE PLO WAS AFFIRMED AS THE "SOLE LEGITIMATE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE." THE SYRIANS, HOWEVER, REPORTEDLY BALKED AGAIN AT ANY REFERENCE TO RECONVENING THE GENEVA CONFERENCE--PRESUMABLY BECAUSE OF THEIR VIEW THAT ANY CONFERENCE NOW COULD ONLY SERVE TO COVER A BILATERAL EGYPTIAN-ISRAELI AGREEMENT AND ANY SUCH REFERENCE WOULD COMPLICATE RELATIONS WITH LIBYA AND OTHER "CONFRONTATION FRONT" STATES. MURPHY

NOTE BY OC/T: TELEGRAM DELAYED IN TRANSMISSION

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